

## ***“In you is the source of life, by your light we see the light”***

*Psalm 36, V 9*

Dear Friends,

The International Association of Lay Cistercian Communities is pleased and honored to invite you to the VI International Encounter of Lay Cistercian Communities, recently constituted as an international association.

14 to 21 June 2014

Lourdes, France

### **I. Spiritual Journey**

In our document of Lay Cistercian Identity (1.1) we state, “This personal call is a means of continuous conversion, one that leads to a rediscovery and deepening of the grace of our baptism and the development of an adult faith.” This phrase offers us a good introduction to one of the main goals of our encounter: Our spiritual journey in the light of the Cistercian charism. Could your lay Cistercian community reflect on the milestones and stages that have marked the rhythm of your progress? How has your community been able to overcome periods of crisis?

Thinking about the benefits of sharing these experiences, we offer you the opportunity to share at the next encounter. With this goal we ask you to write your common experiences (not individual) of your lay Cistercian way – difficulties, benefits, resources to face crises, evolution, light (easy) and dark (difficult) times. In summary, all which makes it possible to incarnate the lay Cistercian life in the world. To assist, it may be important to refer to the lay Cistercian document adopted unanimously in Huerta (2008), the ILC statutes adopted in Dubuque (2011), as well as the work on formation that was started in Dubuque and which will continue with this encounter.

We ask you to send your community’s spiritual journey to your steering committee representative no later than 30 November 2013.

Format: 1 – 4 pages maximum

Deadline: 30 November 2013

Send to: [thmcmahon@g.com](mailto:thmcmahon@g.com)

Once we receive your work, the steering committee will select two stories (for the English-language) which will be presented in the plenary session. If the group prefers, its story may be presented anonymously. Even if the group cannot participate in the encounter, their story may be shared.

The ILC steering committee, after reading and reflecting on all of the works received, will try to extract incarnate examples of lay Cistercian values as listed in the identity document to be worked on by the language groups during the encounter. The ILC will translate a combined document and send it out no later than 1 March 2014. Each group can have time to review it in order to prepare for the encounter. During the encounter, after working in their language group, we will share all of the gifts received by the grace of living the Cistercian charism. We hope to attain as a result of all this work a common reflection on the lay Cistercian spiritual journey that may help us all. This reflection may be presented to the General Chapter in September 2014.

## **II. Formation**

The second goal of the encounter is to finalize a statement on formation as started in Dubuque (2011), in order to adopt a statute on formation. For that reason, please find attached a synthesis of the three documents generated in Dubuque. Prior to the encounter at Lourdes, you will have time to work individually and as a community so that your delegates can finalize the document in Lourdes.

## **III. Association Business Meeting**

The third objective of the encounter will be to address association business. This includes:

- 1) Review association membership
- 2) Review financial accounts
- 3) Adopt by-laws
- 4) Steering Committee selection and election
- 5) Open questions

Until by-laws are adopted, we remind you that decisions will be determined as we did in Huerta and Dubuque with the vote of an absolute majority. Each community present will have one vote.

#### **IV. Registration**

Please find attached the initial registration form which must be returned by 1 September 2013. This registration form indicates whether your community will attend the encounter and the number who will attend (maximum 2 lay representatives and 1 monastic liaison).

The final registration (sent to you at a later date), which must be returned by 1 March 2014, will provide the name(s) of your delegates, monastic liaison, dates of travel, etc.

ALL registrations must be returned to: [marie-christine.rosignol@wanadoo.fr](mailto:marie-christine.rosignol@wanadoo.fr)

We are pleased to prepare this international encounter of lay Cistercian communities and we hope that you will be pleased to participate.

In all Cistercian love,

Marie Christine Rosignol

Tina Payare

Teresa McMahan

*May God bring to completion in you that which he has begun.*